THE REFORMATION OF Christian Religion

By

IOSIAH,

Being a commendable Example for all PRINCES, professing the Gospell, to follow, With a warning to all faithfull and true-hearted Subjects to encourage their Princes in so happy a course.

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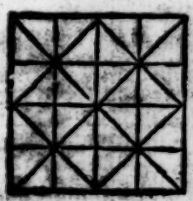
1 TIM. 2. 1, 2.

I exhort therefore first of all, that supplications and prayers, and intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men; for Kings, and all that are excellent, that we may lead a peaceable and quiet life, in all godlinesse and honesty.



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TO THE CHRISTIAN READER.

THou canſt not be ignorant (gentle Reader) how the Lord hath this long time, with a full hand, powred his bleſſings upon this our land and people of England: for beſide infinite other, how can we forget that bleſſed deliverance of Romiſh Egypt, the enjoying of the glorious Goſpell of Chriſt, and with it the aboundance of peace, ever ſince continued upon us? the many and wonderful preſervations of our Church, King, and countrey, ſo that of neceſsity we muſt acknowledge, that as with Iſrael and Judah, ſo with us the Lord hath dealt, towitt, that as the girdle cleaveth to the loynes of a man, ſo hath the Lord tyed himſelf to this whole nation, that we might be his people. Ier. 13. 11. But have we againe on our behalfe againe kept Covenant with the Lord, in taking him to be our God, to know, and cleave unto him in all our wayes? Indeed I confeſſe to the glory of his name, that he hath, by the preaching of his Word, ſhowne us the meanes to ſeeke him, but how ſmall account made wee of that his mercy and goodneſſe to us, and how quickly

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and justly that care began, and still continueth to be quenched in us, whilst we have sought, not the Lord, but our selves, our profits, our pleasures: Let the wofull estate of our Church and people, (as touching spirituall things) speake, and beare witnesse, wherein now, after two and thirty yeers enjoying the Gospell of our Saviour Christ, there still raigneth in such aboundant measure, ignorance, atheisme, swearing, contempt of God and his word, oppression, adulteries, drunkennes, and all manner of sin, in all places, among all sorts, & conditions of men, yea, in such strength, as we are come unto that, that he which refraineth from evil, maketh himselfe a prey, and yet none may reprove or rebuke one another, *what then shall we say to these things? surely feare, lest that complaint and threatning of the Prophet against Israel, belong also unto us.*

Esay 59.15.
Hos. 4.4.

Heare the Word of the Lord yee children of Israel (*yea, and of England*) for the Lord hath a controversie with the inhabitants of the Land, because there is no truth nor mercy, nor Knowledge of God in the Land; by swearing, and lying, and stealing, and whoring, they breake out, and blood toucheth blood; therefore shall the Land mourne, and every one that dwelleth therein shall bee cut off, with the beasts of the field, and with the fowles of the Heaven, and also the fishes of the Sea shall bee taken away: let us heare therefore and give eare, and not

Hos. 4.1,2,3.

not be proud, for the Lord hath spoken it: let us not trust in lying words, saying, the Temple of the Lord, the Temple of the Lord, this is the Temple of the Lord, but let us search and try our wayes, and turne againe to the Lord: *let us lift up our hearts with our hands unto God in the Heavens: let us consider the time of our visitation, and the things that belong unto our peace; let us all pray that the Lord, (who hath the hearts of Princes in his hand, to turne as the Rivers of waters) would worke in our Magistrates, from the highest to the lowest, the affection of* David, *that they suffer not their eyes to sleepe, nor their eye-lids to slumber, till by the blessing of God, they have brought England to be (in farre more excellent manner then yet it is) an habitation for the mighty God of* Jacob.

Ier. 13. 15. Ier. 7. 4. Lam. 3. 40, 41. Luk. 19. 42. Pro. 21. 1. Psa. 132. 4, 5.

That they suffer not the faithfull Ministers of Christ, which should feed his Church, which he hath purchased with his blood, *to be uniustly slandered, silenced, imprisoned, arraigned, utterly removed from their people and Ministery, as much as lyeth in these, who contrary to the expresse rule given us by Christ, by his Prophets and Apostles, exercise dominion over their fellow Elders, and the heritage of God.*

Acts 20. 28. Lu. 22. 25. 26. Ier. 5. 31. 1 Pet. 5. 3. 3 Io. 9, 10. Mar. 15. 14. Mic. 3. 6.

That they doe not still suffer the blinde to lead the blinde; such as unto whom night is for a vision, over whom the sunne is gone downe, and the day become darke. But that

according to their authority and wisedome, given them of God, and according to his will, revealed in his word, they provide by all good meanes of godly entrance into the functions of the Church, quiet continuance therein, faithfull performance of the duties of God, required to be done, sufficient maintenance, good bringing up of youth in Tit.1.5.9. *Schooles and Vniversities; that the Churches which have heretofore, by the mercy of God learned Christ, in the Word preached, may hencefor th still be taught, and withall governed according to Christ, his holy institution and Ordinance.*

To *move hereunto, hath this treatise following bin written, and is now published, wherein the duty of Christian Princes and* Magistrates, *is plainely described in that most singular example of* Josiah, *the annointed of the Lord, who unto* Judah was the breath of their Nostrils, the 2.Reg. 23.25. Crowne of their head, yea, the joy of their heart, and *who of the Lord was so accepted, as by his spirit he witnesseth of him,* that like unto him was there no King before, that turned to the Lord with all his heart, and with all his soule, and with all his might, according to all the Lawes of Moses, neither after him arose there any one like unto him.

That the like affection and practice, may bee in our Christian Josiah *and other* Magistrates, *it is thy duty (Christian Reader) to aske it at the hands of God, who hath commanded (and therefore*

therefore if our sinnes hinder not, is ready to hear us therein, thatwe pray for Kings, and Goovernours of his people, that they may so rule, as wee may live peaceable lives under them. Yet if God in his just judgement sustereth Magistrates; *and* Ministers *to abound in sinne, yea dissembling* Papists, *(the arch-enemies of* Christ, *and hinderers of his* Gospell, *by themselves, and some other their friends, hinder the building of the wals of* Sion; yet mourne thou for the abominations of the people, *And assuredly thou shalt see that when* they which would not kisse the Sonne, shall perish in his wrath, then all such shal be blessed that trust in him.

Ezech. 9. 4.

Psal. 2. 12.

Pray for the Peace of Ierusalem, let them prosper that love thee. Psal. 122. 6.

THE REFORMATION OF CHRISTIAN RELIGION, BY IOSIAH.

2 KING. 23. 24. 25. 26. 27.

Iosiah *also tooke away them that had familiar spirits, and the South-sayers, and the Images, and the Idols, and all the abominations, that were espied in the Land of* Iudah, *and in* Ierusalem, *to performe the words of the Law, which were written in the Booke of* Helkiah, *the Priest, found in the house of the Lord.*

Like unto him was there no King, before him, that turned to the Lord, with all his heart, according to all the law of Moses, *neither after him arose there any like him.*

Notwithstanding the Lord turned not from the fiercenesse of his great wrath, wherewith he was angry against Iudah, *because of all the provocations, wherewith* Manasses *had provoked him,* &c.

THese words doe shut up the History of the godly, and memorable acts, of the good King *Iosiah* by name, which also containe notable matter worthy the view, (as well to provoke unto duty, as to ministèr comfort if need be) of those rulers and Magistrates, whose excellent title doth make them stand bound to the upholding and defending of the true Catholike and Apostolicke faith. The Scripture set downe, divideth it selfe into some deeds of King *Iosiah*, and a decree of God, touching that people of Israel. The deeds of *Iosiah*, are set downe and noted to be an exceeding zealous reforming of religion.

As touching his reforming of religion, it is called a turning

to the Lord, wherein we are to note his great and godly zeale, which is set down to be exceeding great both inwardly and outwardly, according to the Law of God, such as exceeded all the Kings besides.

But before we come to speak particularly of the worthy acts of this noble King, we have something to speake, touching his Office and calling. For we which are the true Church of God, built upon no man, but the writings of the Prophets & Apostles, *Which were given by inspiration from God, Christ Iesus being the corner stone*, are so far off from being of their minds, who *Speak evill of lawfull authority*, and give forth *Rayling sentence against it*, as that we both warn them to avoid the condemnation of them that were carried with like spirit, & that they with all dutifullnes, *Submit themselves to the civill powers for conscience sake*, the resisting of whom is the resisting of God, who is able to *Break in peeces* all rebels, & to maintaine his own ordinance, to the good of them that do well, & to the terrour of the wicked, that they be *Subject to every ordinance of man, for the Lords sake, as to the King, or those that are sent of the King, to take vengeance of them which doevill, and to the praise of them that do well*, to have authority, not only over civill persons, and in civill causes, but over Ecclesiasticall persons, & in Ecclesiasticall causes. To provide good laws, not only that men walk according to the commandement of the second Table, in an outward obedience to superiors, in peaceablenes, in cleannes, & chastity, &c. but that the first be chiefly regarded, that the true God be worshipped according to his word, that Idolatry be cast out, & Idolaters, & Hereticks, be punished according to Gods word, by the sword of justice. Whereunto if Christian Magistrates be not yet so forward, though we are not to account them as tyrants, yet the Lords Ministers are to call upon them most zealously, for the reforming the Lords house, as the Prophets did, yet did not take in hand to reforme it themselves: wherefore we justifie *Iosiah* his Office, and calling to be of God, whose authority was as well over the Priests, as over the people, to take order as well for the honour and worship of God, as for the peace and safety of the Common-wealth, seeing that God had given the inheritance of the Kingdome to *David*, and his lawfull successors: as other Kingdomes are given also by the King of Kings, to earthly Kings, and

2 Tim. 3. 16. Ephe. 2. 20.

Iude 8. vers.

Rom. 13. 5. Psalm. 2. 9.

1 Pet. 2. 13. 14.

Deu. 17.

Deu. 13. 5.

Hag. 1. & 8.

to

to their heires by a lawfull poſſeſſion till hee in his judgement ſhall cut off the entaile. Againſt which his government the Prophet *Eſaiah* ſpeaketh not as of a thing unlawfull in regard of his young yeares: for he doth not ſay there, that it is not lawfull for children to rule, but he ſaith, that God will ſet up *children to rule them*, which children, if they have not the ſpirit of counſell and wiſedome, but therein are as babes and children, though they have hoary haires, they may be a plague for the ſinnes of the people: Howbeit, the ſinne is in their manner of raigning, not in their raigning when they come lawfully unto it. Now if God ſet children in age, and make them aged in counſell and wiſedome, and the true feare of God, then not onely is their raigne lawfull, and the authority of their under-officers, and elders of the people, whom they ſhall ſet up, but alſo for the comfort of all the children of God. Which thing alſo may be ſaid, of the raigne of women, if God ſet up wicked women (or womaniſh men) to weare the Crowne, and to execute juſtice to a nation their raigne is lawfull, and not to be reſiſted, but the manner of raigning is wicked. But if God lawfully ſet up a woman to the ſhame of men, to give advice and to direct from God, for the government of the Kingdome, as ſometimes over Iſrael he ſet *Debora*, a mother in Iſrael, indowed with his graces more then many men, this is not only lawfull, as that of the Queen of *Sheba*, which came to heare the wiſdome of *Solomon*: or that of *Candaces*, the Queene of *Ethiopia*, whoſe Treaſurer came to worſhip at *Ieruſalem*: but very ſoveraigne and comfortable to all faithfull and true hearted Chriſtians. Indeed we confeſſe, they are to keepe within the bounds of Magiſtracy, they are not to breake out as *Vzziah*, to exerciſe the proper office of the miniſtery, to teach, expound the Scriptures, pray, and adminiſter the Sacraments in the Congregation: as it is not lawfull for Miniſters of the Goſpell, to breake the liſts of their calling, to take the Crowne, the Scepter, or the ſword of juſtice unto them to beare rule, (and to be called gracious and bountifull Lords.) But if they by a lawfull ſucceſſion, either after the death of the father, or husband, or brother, &c. or any other way whereby the Kingdome & inheritance is left in their hands, & committed to their government, their title being good, & they being right inheritrices, they are ſet up by

Eſay. 3. 4.

Judg. 4. 4.

1 King. 10. 1. Act. 8. 27.

2 Cro. 26. 18.

1 Tim. 2. 12.

1 Pet. 5. 2.

Luke 22. 24.

the Lord, their raigne is lawfull, and those under-officers, set up by them to be taken for the Lords ordinances. For *Maachah*, *Asa* his mother, and *Athaliah*, though one was put from government, the other to death, the Kingdome was in neither of their hands, *Asa* being above his mother, as *Solomon* above *Bethsheba*, and *Ioash* to raigne before *Athaliah*, which had bloudily and unjustly usurped.

2 Chr. 15. 16.
2 King. 11. 15.

Now then we having declared the lawfulnes of the calling of this Magistrate, being a member of the Church of God, and young in yeares (for he was but eight yeares old, when he began to raigne, foure yeares sooner then his father, and one yeare later then *Ioash*) we are to looke upon the zeale which he had in reformation of Religion. In that it is said, *He turned to the Lord againe*, it is a speech drawne from men, who in seditious times, withdraw themselves from their lawfull governour, to take part with usurpers, to rise up against their King and Soveraigne, who yet being afterwards touched with a sight and feeling of their foolishnesse, returne againe, throw downe themselves at the feet of their Princes, promising to shew all faithfulnesse, wayting for favour, and it noteth unto us first a treachery that was in *Iosiah*, and in his people, against the Lord whom they had forsaken, and against whom they rose up, which we are a little to stand upon, before we come unto his conversion.

2 King. 22. 1.
2 Cro. 33. 1.
2 Cro. 24. 1.

This treachery had shewed it selfe notably, both in his father *Amon*, and in his grand-father *Manasseth*, besides in other his predecessours, from the dayes of *Solomon*. Indeed *Solomon*, in the prime of his raigne, built the house of God, and established the worship of God, according to all that *David* had received from God by writing, but he afterward quenching his zeale with the pleasures of sinne, was lead from honour to shame, and (had not Gods mercy saved him) to eternall destruction, whose sonne *Reboboam*, lost ten parts of the Kingdome, after him succeeded *Abijam*, who walked in the apostsie of his father *Reboboam*, where but that God was minded to shew mercy to *David*, hee had put out the light of *Israel*, but for his sake he gave to *Abiam* *Asa*, and after him good *Iehosaphat*, whose hearts the Lord stirred up to a zeale of his house. But *Iehosaphat* matching his sonne with *Ahabs* daughter, made a way for *Ieboram* his sonne, to be as wicked

2 King. 21. 20. & 2 Cro. 33. 2.
2 Cro. 5. 1.
1 King. 11. 11.
1 King. 12. 16.
1 Kin. 15. 3. 4. & verse 11.
1 King. 22. 43.
2 Cro. 21. 6.

as *Ahab*. *Iehorams* wife was *Athaliah*, by whom he had *Ahaziah*, who dyed in the first year of his raigne. *Athaliah* usurped after the spilling of all the royall bloud except *Ioash*, the sonne of *Ahaziah*, whom the Lord marvellously preserved to the Kingdom: , and to gouerne in his feare all the dayes of *Iehoiadah* the Priest: whose son *Amaziah*, did that which was right in the eyes of the Lord, though he had his faults: so did his sonne *Vzziah*: and *Iotham* his sonne in like manner. But *Ahaz* the son of *Iotham*, walked in the wayes of *Ieroboam*, & the wicked Kings of Israel: he begat *Ezechiah*, who destroyed the abhominations which his father had set up. But this *Manasseth* the sonne of *Ezechiah*, in him the measure of apostasie was in a manner fulfilled. As touching whose wickednesse, it is set downe both generally, that it was the same that the heathen committed, more particularly, he set up open Idolatry, both in the Land of *Iuda*, where was set up and maintained the worship of *Baal*, the Sunne, the Moone, and the Starres, for whom were appointed high places, and Altars, and Groves, for to offer even their owne children by fire to the Divels, and also as it were to provoke the most jealous God the more, he set up his Idolatry in the house of the Lord, where he could not abide any to be worshipped besides himselfe, maintaining also witch-craft and sorcery, familiar spirits and south-sayers, to stir up the holy one to anger the more: wherefore God spake in his wrath, that he would deale with them, as he had dealt with *Samariah*, and sweep them cleane out of the Land, and forsake them, and deliver them up into the hands of their enemies. Against all which sinnes, if *Iosiah* had not set himselfe and beat them down, he might have beene guilty as *Amon* his father, of all the Idolatries from *Solomon*, to the death of *Amon*, both because he might else be said, to have committed them in the loynes of his father, and might have beene said to have iustified them, had hee not laboured utterly to cast them out in great zeale, although he had not in his owne person committed the same things, which as it may be good for all to thinke of, so that they may leave flattering of themselves, when they are not touched with a zeale of religion, and a desire to recover that favour of God, which their fathers have lost. So had Kings, and Princes, Rulers, and Governours, need to bestirre themselves, when it is recorded unto them how their

2 C. 22.2.
2 Kin. 11.1.2.
2 Cro. 22.11.
2 Cro. 24.2.
2 Cro. 25.2. & 26.4. & 27. 2.
2 Cro. 28.1.2.
2 King. 18.4.
2 King. 21.1.
2 King. 22.13. 2. 34. 6.

bloud and ſtocke have bin ſtayned with falling from the faith, into ſpirituall whoredome, Idolatry, and ſuperſtition.

Iude. 3. v. 2 Theſ. 2. 3. It is well knowne, that the faith was once ſince Chriſts comming, given to the Saints, and the Goſpell was preached through the world, but ſithens there hath beene a defection and a generall falling away from the faith in the whole world, and the man of

Rev. 17. 1. 2. ſinne hath beene revealed, and the whore of *Babylon*, who hath made all the world drunken with her cup of fornications. To leave other nations, it is well knowne, how our whole State in this nation, though God hath ſhewed great mercy in rayſing up Miniſters to make the darkneſſe diſcovered, to make the truth manifeſt, to call men to faith in Chriſt, and to obedience to the Goſpell. Yet it hath beene a fooliſh people, and a ſtiffe-necked, either ſtopping the eare that it ſhould not heare, or pulling backe the ſhoulder, that it would not beare the yoke of obedience.

Our Kings, Princes, Judges, Magiſtrates, people and Miniſters, have committed two evills, *They have forſaken the Lord, and digged pits*: was it not enough for them to have forſaken that moſt ſoveraigne doctrine of ſalvation? By faith in Chriſt onely, of true

Rom. 3. 22. &c. John 13. 34. Ephe. 1. 4. John 5. 39. Rom. 12. 6. Mat. 18. 17. love, proceeding from a lively faith, of free election to ſalvation, before the world, of the uſe of the holy Scriptures, for the trying of Doctrine, of the true miniſterie of the Goſpell, and the lawfull Diſcipline and Government of the Church: But they muſt perſecute the truth, worſe then Jewes, ſpitefully intreat the Lords Miniſters, burne all thoſe that profeſſe to bee ſaved by faith in Chriſt Jeſus onely: Burne all the books of the Scriptures: Bring into the Church his greateſt enemie, to bee made head of the Church, as it were in deſpite of Chriſt, that ſame Antichriſt of *Rome*, with his doctrine and government, to preach ſalvation by workes, by giving Money to the Pope, and his Prieſts, to have forgiveneſſe of ſinnes paſt and to come, to ſpue out blaſphemie, which defile a man, and to forbid the eating of ſome meats, which are ſo farre from defiling a man, as that they are commanded to bee received with thankſgiving: to forbid Marriage, honourable for all men, and to ſet up brothell houſes, to prophane the Lords day, and to invent new Holy-dayes, to forſake God, and to worſhip Angels,

Saints,

Saints, damned ſoules it may be, ſilver, gold, ſtocks, ſtones, Images ſet up in high ſtreets, in Churches, and glaſſe-windows, to bring in ſundry degrees of Miniſters, ſome Cardinals, ſome Lords, ſome Lords graces, ſome blind guides, dumb dogges, &c. What worſhip was in long prayers, bawling ſongs, outward apparell, coapes, ſurpleſſes, rochets, and tippets, all which, and a thouſand more abhominations had they ſet up, as men of whom *Manaſſeh*, and that people will bee juſtified at the day of judgement. All this may humble our King, our Nobles, our Judges, our whole people, who may know by remembring and reading, this to have beene the provocation of Gods wrath, wherewith our predeceſſours, our parents, our progenie, have provoked the Lord: of which ſinnes and wrath of God wee are juſter inheritours then of any lands or dignities they have left us. They went not ſcot free: but what if the full vengeance bee referred to this proud and ſecure age, what if God will require ſatisfaction for all the ſinnes from *William the Conqueror* of this generation? *God will not the death of a ſinner, but that death ſhould be threatned, that they which belong unto the Lord, may by hearing, feare and repent for thoſe things, and take a new courſe: The ſonne ſhould not die for the fathers offence alone, but if he be voyde of the Spirit of God, and do not openly profeſſe a forſaking of all the ſinnes of his predeceſſours, but walke in ſome of them, if God condemne him, he doth him no wrong.* Ioſiah he turned againe to the Lord, hee profeſſed a miſliking and condemning of all the ſinnes of his fathers, and was ſore touched and humbled for them, and beſtirred himſelfe to reforme them: and good reaſon, leaſt hee being found in the ſinnes of his fathers, hee ſhould have beene partaker of their plagues, hee knew their reaſons to bee madneſſe, who would have cuſtome to make ſinne to ſtand for a law. But as touching his turning to the Lord and his reformation, it is noted to bee throughly done, and to be truely done. It was done *with all his heart and with all his ſoule*, it was neither for an outward ſhew, nor done any whit doubtingly, or with any unwillingneſſe or coldneſſe, but as of a full perſwaſion and great earneſtneſſe, neither was it any raſh zeale, but it was according *To all the Law of Moſes*, which was the rule and direction from God for the worſhip

Ezec. 18. 20.

of

of his Majestie and the ordering of his Church: as also this is here noted, so in this Chapter and the next before it is set down more at large, where first is set downe his manner of life to be well pleasing to God, that it was uncorrupt as *Davids*, then the going in hand with the worship of God. In the eight yeare of his Raigne, and the sixteenth of his age, there is noted in the 2 Chron. 34. how hee gave his minde to a zeale of Religion, and an earnest studie of the feare of God. In the twelfth yeare of his Raigne, & twentieth of his age is set down, how he threw down all the monuments of Idolatry that were in the Land of *Iudah* and *Ierusalem* to be seene, who himselfe looking on, set men on work to throw downe *Balaams* Altars, and their Images, to break downe the Idolatrous groves and their Images, either graven or molten, which he stamped to peeces, and strawed the dust of them upon the Priests graves, and burnt the Priests bones upon their Altars, and as he did this in the Land of *Iudah*, so hee did the like in the parts of *Israel*, bordering upon them, being become tributaries, *Ephraim*, *Manasseh*, and *Simeon* to *Nephtali*. After the scouring of the Land from this filth, he in the eighteenth of his Raigne, and twentie sixth of his age, setteth in hand with the house of the Lord that was at *Ierusalem*, sending his warrant to the high Priest for making ready the money that was gathered, and the delivering it to the Masters of the worke, who might set men on worke to build the House. After which he heard of the finding of the booke of the Law of *Moses* that was lost: He caused it to be read to him, he humbled himselfe, seeing the fearefull threatnings against the whole Land: sent to *Hulda* the Propheteſſe, to be more confirmed of the Lords purpose, and whether God would shew him any favour, after his humbling and receiving of some comfort, that God would shew him favour, and deferre the vengeance till after his death; He called a Parliament of the Priests, the Prophets, and all the Elders of the people, caused all the words of the Law to be read unto them, bound him selfe and all the people by Covenant to be the Lords servants, to doe all the words that were written in the booke of the Law, Hee caused all the Idolatrous vessels to be brought out of the Lords House, burnt them as detestable without the holy City, and with the dust prophaned superstitious *Bethel*: put

2 Chron. 34. vers. 2. &c.

dovvne

downe all the *Chemarims* which offered incense to the Idols. He carryed the grove out of the Lords House, burned it and cast the dust upon the peoples graves: He brake downe the brothell houses: He called the Priests from Idolatry, which had beene defiled to a private life, defiled *Tophath*, the abhomination of *Moloch*: Hee slew the horses and burnt the Chariots dedicated to the Sunne: Hee overthrew the Monuments of Idolatrie in *Ahabs* house, and those that were set up by *Salomon* and *Ieroboam*, with the Idolatries of *Samaria*, slew *Ieroboams* Priests, and burnt their bones on the Altars. Furthermore hee gave commandement for the celebrating of the Passeover, appointing the Priests and the Levites to their charge, to their Orders, and severall places, to offer Sacrifices, and to teach the people, and to doe the Service of the Sanctuary, with the Singers and Porters in their standing, and at every gate: Hee commanded the Arke to be put in the Temple, the Priests and the people to bee prepared and sanctified by a due humbling: Hee gave Lambes and Kids thirty thousand, and Bullocks three thousand, so that the chiefe Priests were provoked to give two thousand six hundred, & three hundred Bullocks, the chiefe Levites five thousand sheepe, and five hundred Bullocks, and the Passeover was kept, with the feast of unleavened bread, such a keeping of Passeover as was not from the dayes of *Samuel* the Prophet, neither did all the Kings of *Israel* keepe the like. All which doe declare the thorough conversion that was in *Iosiah*, so that it might well bee said, *That he turned with all his heart and all his soule*: which example so godly and so famous, we must not thinke it set downe as such an Historie that is to please the senses and to passe away, or that concerned that people onely, and not us: *But the whole Scripture given by inspiration of God, is profitable to teach, to improve, to correct, and to instruct in righteousnesse, and whatsoever is written, is written for our learning.* And as the examples of the wicked who felt Gods iudgements, so the examples of the godly, upon whom the Lord magnified his mercies are written for our instruction, *to admonish even us, upon whom the ends of the world are come:* wherfore out of this one example, so approved of God, there ariseth great comfort, as unto other Christian Princes & Magistrats, so

2 Tim. 3. 16.

Rom. 15. 4.

1 Cor. 10. 11.

unto the Kings most excellent Majestie, whom God hath made a Governour of Governours within these his Dominions, and all those that have beene stirred up of *God* in sincerity to strengthen his hands in the reforming of those Idolatries and superstitions, that wickednesse and rebellion, that wee and our fathers have fallen into, and were deepely sunke downe in. True it is, we and our *Governours* are condemned as heretickes, and as those that will not beleeve as the Church doth beleeve, nor yeeld obedience to our Holy father, nor sucke the breasts of our Catholicke Mother, we despise their doctrine, wee cast off their government: but all are not heretickes that walke not in the wayes of their fleshly fathers. If *Iosiah* had beene so called by the ten Tribes who followed *Ieroboam*, and walked in all the wayes of *Achab*, and now felt the whip: had he and his people therefore beene hereticks? If we *after the way which they call heresie, worship the God and Father of our Lord and Saviour Iesus Christ,* why should we not take comfort, *while wee for doing well are evill spoken of*? But it is for this, we beleeve not as the Church beleeveth, because we professe *nothing to be beleeved necessarie to salvation which is not conteyned in the writings of Moses and the Prophets, the Apostles and the Evangelists.* That wee professe so indeed we cannot denie, for our owne hand-writing is in print for all the world to see. But if the Church be they that are built *upn the foundation of the Prophets and Apostles, Christ Iesus being the corner Stone:* If the Church be they, *that search the Scriptures, that therein they may find eternall life:* That *neither adde to the written word, nor take away from it:* That *beleeve no other Gospel, then that which was preached & set downe in writing, though it came in the manner of an Apostle or Angell from heaven:* then let them not condemne us for this profession, least they giving forth sentence of condemnation against us the true Church of God, who with Christ Iesus shall judge the reprobate Angels, throw back the sentence upon their own pates, upon whom as these that are fallen, it shall light most justly: Why should they require of us to acknowledge the Pope of Rome to be our head and King, our Arch-bishop to order the Church at his pleasure, and to command our Magistrats what hee will, to rule over the consciences, and to punish with civill punishments. In the Church may any bee called Father

Act. 24. 14.
Mat. 5. 10.
1 Pet. 3. 17.
2 Pet. 1. 19.
Artic. Relig.
Ephe. 2. 20.
Ioh. 5. 39.
Deut. 12. 32.
Gal. 1. 8.
2 Cor. 6. 3.

Father or *Rabbi* which is great, after any such manner as the Pope doth require, as though it were in any man to save, or to set downe any way of his owne head to salvation: Amongst the Ministers it is said, that they are all as brethren, and equall, whose Lord and Master is Christ Iesus, (who is the onely high Priest, the onely Arch-bishop and chiefe Shepheard of our soules) for the instruction of his servants, came to serve, and not to bee served: He cannot bee Christs Vicar, seeing his promise is to be with the Church, to the end of the world: for his being the Successour of *Peter*, how can that be? seeing hee bewayleth not his fall, hee receiveth not reproofe, hee giveth no account of his doings, he acknowledgeth himselfe not a fellow Elder: all which *Peter* did. For exercising the sword of justice, or to have dealing in civill affairs, or to over-rule the consciences, what can be more proud and Lucifer-like? When God saith, They shall not governe as Lords of the Nations, be Lords over Gods heritage, or be called *gracious Lords*, and he saith, he will: nay hee will be so indeed. Why should we not therefore renounce and tread downe the tyranny of the man of sin brought in by our fathers, as well as *Iosiah* cast out *Ieroboams* raigning, entertained by his ancestors, seeing these two brethren, the Pope and *Ieroboam*, are so like one another, as he that had but one eye, would acknowledge them to be children of one father, the Devill. They say, we have not obeyed our mother, by our mother they meane the Church of *Rome* that now is. But if she be none of our mother, if she hath defiled the marriage-bed, and be divorced from our Father, and setteth her love upon those that are no gods, and is become a common harlot, and receive into her, damnable doctrine, the seed of Satan, wee may not obey her nor follow after her, for feare least wee being partakers of her sinnes, wee become also partakers of her plagues, no, it was our parts to professe against that false and wicked doctrine, except wee should be poysoned with it, and so sweepe the filth out of our Land and our Assemblies for the worship of God, to throw out the blasphemous Masse and Massing Priests their worshipping of Idols, to throw downe their Idols, their Altars, their Rood-lofts, their Latin prayers, their unprofi-

Mat. 23. 7. Heb. 13. 20. Luk. 22. 27. Mat. 28. 30. Mat. 26. 73. Gal. 2. 11. Act. 11. 4. 1 Pet. 5. 1. Luk. 22. 25.

table Ceremonies, partly Iewish, partly Heathenish, partly of their owne devising: to sweepe the uncleane cages of the Abbyes, the Priories, the Nunries: that wee have entertained the preaching of the Gospel, the ministring of the Sacraments ordained of God, that wee pray in an understanding tongue, that we professe our faith not to be grounded upon man, upon Councels, Fathers, the Apocrypha writings, but upon the Canonicall Scriptures, that the Church is not to admit any Ceremonies for the worship of God, contrary to his word. If this be commanded by God, what are we, that we should despise his commandement, and continue in the provoking of his wrath, seeing wee are not stronger then hee, and it is so fearefull a thing to fall into the hand of God. No, our horrible sinne is, that wee have not beene so thankefull to GOD, for reserving our Prince and Governours, and stirring up their hearts to so worthy a worke in the glorifying of God, and the procuring more blessings to his children, then all our tongues can speake, that wee have not in our prayers to God, strengthened their hands to finish the worke. They have done in this, but as this good Prince did, and had they onely this one example to follow, is it not writ-

Deut. 17. 18. ten that the King whom God shall set up, *shall studie diligently the Law written by Moses, and feare God, and see observed all the words of the Law, and the Statutes there set downe to doe them.* Was not *Iosiah* commanded the same thing, that the *Booke should not depart from him, but he should studie it, and doe according to all that is written in it, without departing either to the right hand or to the left?* was not this

Ios. 23. 6. 14. Psal. 132. 12. 1 Reg. 5. 5. 1 Reg. 15. 11. 2 Reg. 12. 4. 2 Reg. 18. 4. the care of *Ioshuah, Salomon, David, Asa, Ioash, Ezechias*, as also of Christian Emperours and Princes, which received the Gospell, which reformed abuses in the Church, and established the true worship of God, according to his word: if that which we have done be not commanded of God, let them shew it: if it bee commanded, let them blush that speake against it. The Lord discovering daily the poyson of their hearts by their impious practises. But wee are not to be ashamed, nor repent us of that wherein wee have done the Lords commandement, as sithens which time wee have tasted deep-

of his mercies, whereby hee hath most sweetly allured

us as with charming ſongs, which might have peirced Adders, that ſtoppe their eares never ſo cloſe, to be carryed with his love to goe on with the worke till all were finiſhed, according to the patterne ſet downe in the word, that it may be ſaid, *Wee turne unto the Lord with all our hearts, with all our ſoules, with all our ſtrength, according to all the Law of Chriſt Ieſus, ſet downe in the writings of Moſes and the Prophets, the Apoſtles and Evangeliſts.* And although the ſinne of our Fathers hath beene ſo great, that it provoked God, as the ſinne of *Manaſſeh*, to ſweepe them and us out of our Land, yet God hath beene patient toward us, and not ſuffered his wrath to breake forth upon us, although it hath almoſt caught us: All this is to call us to humbling, to faſting and mourning, to renting of hearts, and to ſeeke for graces from heaven, whereby we may zealouſly goe in hand a freſh with the worke left unperfect, that we adde thoſe things in the Church which be wanting, and cut off the things which are ſuperfluous, and now if God hath humbled our King and his Nobles, not with a feare of *Haman* and the reſt of the enemies, but with a view of Gods wrath, which by our true humbling, may turne upon our enemies, and if it be his pleaſure (or rather the will of God) that we faſt and pray for him, that hee may find favour in the eyes of his Lord and King Chriſt Ieſus, that not onely hee may have the golden Scepter held up to his comfort, but encouragement to ſpeake and to make his requeſt, with the promiſe of the grant to the eſtabliſhing of Chriſts Kingdome, if his deſire be that the will of God, touching the government of his Church be laid before him, as the booke of the Law was brought before *Ioſiah*, if to this end hee hath gathered the learned Miniſters, the grand fathers of the Land, and the moſt godly amongſt the people, if his purpoſe bee as *Ioſiah* did, to make a Covenant before the Lord, that they will follow the Lord and keepe his Commandements, without turning to the right hand or to the left, then it betokeneth God will yet worke great things for his Church, by this meanes, then let the Lords Miniſters mourne, and they that are his rememberers give him no reſt. Let the honourable Fathers, and they that ſit at the ſeat of Iuſtice, give glory to God in confeſſing

Pſal. 38. 4.

Rom. 2. 4.

Heſt. 4. 16.

their sinnes, and all they whose hearts are true to God, and their Prince, and desire not the day of their owne destruction doe likewise: And let a diligent search be made after that whole order that God hath set downe for his house, which is his Church, and let the Scriptures be judge, If the Scriptures doe determine that man hath authority to abolish the offices for God his Church, which Christ hath set downe to be perpetuall, the Pastours, the Teachers, the Elders, and the Deacons, in everie Church and Congregation, that man hath authority to take the keyes from the Church, whereby they may unlocke the Church doores, and Christs Kingdome to the repentant, and locke out the stubborne, to take away their authority, to elect and ordaine Ministers, to decide controversies touching principall points of Religion and things indifferent, by meetings and Synods, speciall or generall. If the Scriptures doe set downe expresly or by a necessary consequence, that man hath authority to set up other offices in Gods Church, then Christ hath set downe, as some few Lords Bishops, with their Chancellors, Arch-deacons, Commissaries, Registers, Summoners, &c. to governe thousands of Churches, so that every Lord Bishop, may doe what him listeth within a large circuit, comman'd the Congregations, as the receiving of dumb dogs, blind guides, idol shepherds, hirelings, Masse-priests, Papists, adulterers, usurers, &c. the cõplaining of godly & painfull preaching pastours, zealous against Popery and sin, labouring to bring the people out of ignorance, superstition, idolatry, and rebellion, that they may worship God in spirit and truth, and bee subject to lawfull authoritie for conscience sake, the complaining of those that are diligent hearers of the word preached, for some forbearing of Ceremonies onely, which for offence sake, they in a conscience as they thinke grounded upon the word, cannot bee perswaded to use, without any malicious meaning, desiring resolution: And this complaining of them doe they command, that they may revile them, forbid them to preach, excommunicate them, &c. If by the Scriptures one Bishop may ordeine Ministers without his fellow Elders, without prayer and fasting, and the advice of the people, If

Eph.4.11.
Rom.12.7.
1 Cor.12.28.
Mat.18.18.
Act.15.23.
Act.15.4.
Rom.14.5.

their

their Courts and the things done in them, the reading and ignorant ministers, and those of lewd life bee approved by the testimony of the holy Scriptures, then after a lawfull and indifferent hearing and seeking to God in the humiliation of the soule, let these officers have written in their fore-heads, the name of the Lord, and let the persons bee proclaimed the Lords annointed, and let the despisers thereof, bee taken for the despisers of God, and let them endure the punishment meet for so haynous transgressors, that Gods wrath may be removed, and the rest may feare to doe the like. But if it be written, *That the Church is the house of God*, to bee ordered by none, but by the order of the housholder himselfe set downe in his word, that the Lord himselfe ordained an holy ministery to bee in every Church (besides the generall offices of the Apostles, Evangelists, and Prophets, which served for the planting and foundation of the Churches, and were not bound so specially to one Congregation) the offices of Pastours, Teachers, Governours, and Deacons, as being sufficient to make us meet togeather in the unity of faith and knowledge, to make us one body of Christ, and members one of another, that Christ hath also left gifts for every one of these offices, charged the Teachers to take heed to teaching, the Pastours to exhortation, the Elders to ruling, the Deacons to distributing, hath given the Church authoritie to bind and to loose. That is, to excommunicate and to receive into the Church, that the Ministers should be ordained with fasting and prayer, by laying on the hands of the Eldership after the election of the people: if it be not written that the Ministers shall be Lords over their fellow brethren, or over Gods heritage, much lesse tyrannously to over-rule the conscience as some doe. If their offices and Courts bee not approved by the Scriptures, then whatsoever good intents pretended, whatsoever custome, or universality alleadged, let them be branded in the forehead with a blacke coale, as prophane things which God hath not called or sanctified, but being remnants of Antichrists government, or at the least mens presumptuous Inventions, let them fall downe as things set on fire, with the Coales of the Altar of the most holy.

Exod. 39.9.
1 Reg. 18.39.
1 Tim. 3.15.
2 Tim. 3.16.
Eph. 4.8.11.
Rom. 12.6.
Mat. 18.18.
Act. 14.23.

holy Scriptures, and let the Gospel which hath so graciously preserved us, raigne amongst us: Christs officers and government be perfectly established amongst us, according to the Scripture, and let all they whose hearts and tongues the Lord hath set on worke, give him no rest untill our King, and our people may see the glory of the Lord round about them, and all things being reformed with the zeale and wisedom of *Iosiah*, according to the word of God, *They may dwell for ever under the shadow of the Almighty*, as in the Arke of *Noah*, and under the pillar of fire by night, and cloud by day, where a thousand may fall at their right hand, & ten thousand at their left, and yet not touch them. This worke as it concerneth especially those, who amongst the rest are instead of the eyes, to survey the whole Countrey, and tongues to enforme the most sacred Senate: So they are more especially to bee prayed for, that God will so open their eyes and guid their hearts aright, as that the lawes for Christs Kingdome, may bee first sought after, cryed for and established, whereby the other good lawes for a peaceable and quiet life, may bee sanctified and blessed of God, and without which there is no true peace to be looked for, or that reverence shall be given to good lawes, set forth, so that all the Parliament house, may know for a surety, that if they honour God, God will honour them: If they choose the Lord Jesus so to be their King, as that they prefer his lawes for his Kingdone, and the free passage of the Gospell, they shall be accounted a wise and understanding people as any is this day under the coape of heaven, if they will heare the wisedome of God, which in the Scriptures hath spoken plainly, and hath cryed so by the voice of his servants whom he hath sent, *That shee is almost hoarse, and stretched out her hands till she is almost weary, there is mercy with the Lord: in the day of their trouble they shall call upon the Lord, & he shall deliver them, and they shal glorifie him.* But if they dishonour God, God will dishonor them: If they cast away the Lord, the Lord will cast away them: If they cast away the word of the Lord, what wisedome is in them, be they esteemed never so wise? If he cry unto them, and they will not heare, they shall one day cry unto him, when he shall not heare, but laugh at their destruction, and then what will

Psal. 91.1.
Gen. 7.19.
Exod. 13.21.
Mat. 6, 33.
1 Sam. 2.30.
Pro. 1.20.
Psal. 131.4.
Psal. 50.15.

will become of our whole people, of our assemblies for the worship of God, our seates of justice, the authority of Magistrates, Fathers, Masters, what will become of our selves, our wives, and children, our families, our possessions, nay of our soules, or of the great name of God, which the enemies would blaspheme in our confusion? Wherefore they whom God hath sealed up, they that love the Lord, let them pray, *That* Iam.5.10.
Gods name may be hallowed, and his Kingdome may come, and his will may be done, even till they see it. The prayer of the righteous availeth much, if it be fervent. They that be men of wisedome, let them with knowledge, utterance, favour, or any way that God shall shew them, rather loose all, *Then the pearle of price*, or, *The treasure hid in the field.* Let those houses of worship, especially whom Mat.13.44.
the Lord hath made right worshipfull, with the feare of his Holy name, and no dissembling love of the Gospell, whether their armes be antient, or the Lord hath lately advanced them above their brethren, to whom the people resort for holy justice, and tryall of their righteous causes, to whom the poore looke up for protection, and ayde, against oppression and tyranny, wherewith the proud, ambitious, and covetous, vex them, pinching the very soules of them, and pining them to death, some, yea thousands, being already dead, and ready daily (the hower of the naturall death, and the day of judgement being so uncertain) to be cast into utter darknesse, and the fire unquenchable, as millions have beene before them, some seeing their misery and their wounds so bleeding, as hardly may be stanched, when they see *Their feeders ever fleesing,* Ier.10.21.23.
and seldome or never feeding, being almost as water spilt upon the ground, 1.2.
that cannot be gathered up, being scarse able to fetch breath, looking to their Lords, their godly Magistrates, the men of Countenance and authority? *As the vallies below, wait for the sweet drops* Eze.34.10.
of the gracious showers, distilling from the mountaines about them, let those Fathers of their Country, rowse up themselves, and look about them, who are called *Shepheards*, *because they are to see the people fed, and nurse Fathers, because they are to see them to have the sincere Milke of the Word. And Watch-men, because they are to* Eze.33.8.
see the watch kept, who by the sword of justice are first to maintaine the worship of God, and the ministery of the Gospell, the onely bond

of peace, and the roote of all true righteousneſſe. Let them lay their heads togeather and adviſe of this matter, as the moſt ſoveraigne good to a Common-wealth: if they ſit ſtill at this time, will it not be lamented? Nay, may it not be thought
Eſter. 4. 14. certainely, That God may ſend ſalvation another way, though they juſtly periſh as guilty of their death, whoſe
Act. 20. 28. *ſoule were purchaſed with the blood of God?* Wherefore at the people crie unto them aloud, I meane their miſery cryeth ſo, that the deafe ſhall ſo heare it, that their eares ſhall tingle. Let them crie and make their complaints to the moſt ſacred Senat, that they may crie unto the Kings moſt excellent Majeſtie, that we all through Chriſt Ieſus may crie more ſtrongly unto God the Father, who for his ſake will hold backe no good thing from thoſe that love him, that God may heare the King, the King may heare the Parliament the Parliament may hear the Fathers of the Countrie, the Fathers may heare the children, and the common people, and we all with our faithfull Paſtours and Teachers, the offices and Lawes that God hath ſet downe in his word, may worſhip *the Lord in ſpirit and truth, to the praiſe of the grace & mercie of God in all holy Congregations through Chriſt Ieſus.* What is the cauſe (trow ye) that ſhould make thoſe who ſhould be forward in this worke, ſo dumbe and ſo tongue-tyed, ſo bound hand and foot, that they cannot ſpeake one word, walke one ſtep, lend one lift, nor make one cleare ſigne with the eye, the finger or the toe, to declare their good deſire *towards the proſperity of the Lords houſe?* Belike it is becauſe they forecaſt what evill ſucceſſe will follow ſo zealous attempts, or what a point of wiſedome it would bee, to bee cloſe and quiet. True it is, when *Ioſiah* had *done all according to the Law of God, with a perfect and upright heart*, yet the juſt Lord who in the dayes of *Manaſſeh* had threatened an utter deſtruction to the Houſe of *Iuda* and the inhabitants of *Ieruſalem*, would not be appeaſed for all this, neither turned he from the fierceneſſe of his wrath, wherewith hee was angrie againſt *Iuda*, becauſe of all the provocations wherewith *Manaſſeh* had provoked him, but ſaid, *Hee would remoove Iuda out of his ſight, as hee put away Iſrael, and would caſt off the Citie of Ieruſalem, which he had choſen, and the houſe whereof hee*

had

had said his name should be there, and indeed that people found that threatening most sure: For shortly after *Iosiah* was taken away by untimely death, by *Pharaoh Necho* King of Egypt, and his sonne *Iehoahae* was carryed in chaines to Egypt and dyed there, and all true Religion was abolished, they first became servants to the King of Egypt, after to the King of *Babylon*, and not long after thirty yeares expired, they were brought to serve the King of *Babel* in a most hard & cruell service, till seven times seven years had passed over, & who knoweth whether the same just God, provoked in like maner in the dayes of our Idolatrous fathers, and in the dayes of *Philip* and *Marie*, hath not set downe such a sentence against this our *Iuda* and *Ierusalem* as cannot be reversed? who knoweth whether after a thorough reformation had and established, our gracious Soveraigne may not be suddainly taken away in token of Gods hot inkindled wrath against his people shortly after, and they become servants to strangers, and many goe not to *Egypt* or *Babylon*, but to hell, to everlasting fire, prepared for the Devill and his servants. These things indeed should both our King and Parliament, Ministers, Magistrats and whole people take to heart: for God is no lesse zealous of Justice now then before time, our contempt of God as great every way as theirs, yet if God commandeth us to *seeke him while hee may be found*, if hee will have vs to heare him *while it is called to day*, if God calleth for humbling and turning unto him with all our heart, and with all our soule, with fasting, weeping and mourning, if hee biddeth to seeke the Kingdome of God and his righteousnesse, why should we not (though he kill us) doe his commandement? Let us doe our parts, and let the Lord doe what seemeth good in his owne eyes, if he shall but let our eyes to see the Church in her brightnesse but one day, as the Disciples saw Christ her spouse glorious in the mount, that shall be so joyfull a day, as may cause all the faithfull to praise God for ever. God is able to doe great things, and will doe for his chosen for Christs sake. *Iosiah* hee found double favour at the Lords hands: First, hee enjoyed the true worship of God, the comfortable promises of his word all his life time, then he was taken away before the evill came

Zeph. 2. 1, 2.
Psa. 95. 7.
Ioel 2. 12.
Mat. 6. 33.
Iob 13. 15.
Marke 9. 4.

Ioel 2.1,3,14. which God had threatned. As the Lord is just to punish sinners, so he is gracious and mercifull, slow to anger, and ready to forgive a people broken-hearted, repenting and turning unto him, and who knoweth whether God will repent him of the evill, or at least, deferre the plague till after our dayes, or hasten the grand reformation, when Christ Iesus shall come for our full deliverance.

Shall we complaine of the great hinderers of this worke that are informers and advisers in the Senate, or shall the fault be all laid on King *Charles*, whom God hath set up in *Iosiahs* place, as one not so willing and ready to this worke as *Iosiah* was? Nay let us complaine of our selves first, who are not so thankefull to God, for that which hee hath wrought by the hands of our King *Charles*, and for that God hath stirred up so many in both the houses, not onely to looke into, and to favour, but to be zealous also of this holy cause. But as surmising and suspecting, doth often argue want of love, so when it breedeth in men infidelity in God, and a sloathfulnesse to necessary duties, it must needs proceed from a lying spirit.

1 Cor. 15.58.

Prov. 21.1. It is God who carrieth the hearts of men, yea and Princes, and turneth them as it pleaseth him, without whom no Monarch of all times, much lesse a Prince being a gracious King, had brought such light out of so great darkenesse, as thousands, have seene in these his Dominions, neither had *Iosiah* beene so wholly bent, to take in hand and goe thorough with so worthy a worke: who can tell whether God hath appointed the incouragement to come from his faithfull and true-hearted subjects, at the willingnesse of whom he may be stirred up, either by the Spirit of God, or by word, or writing, as King

2 Chro. 15. 2. *Asa* was stirred up at the writing of *Azariah*, who after hee had spoken before all the Assembly, he delivered unto him, wherein hee shewed, that there was nothing they need to feare, if they by faith in God, be moved to doe his will. But if by infidelity they be affraid to doe his worke, there is nothing for them to trust to. *The Lord was with you* (saith hee) *while yee were with him, and if you seeke him, hee will bee in a readinesse for you: but if you forsake him, he will forsake you.* He sheweth an example of the Israelites, who had sit long without the true God, the

the Law, and without a teaching Priest, who if they had reformed these things, God would have holpen them: But seeing they did not, God delivered them to be beaten & vexed with their enemies, whereupon he grounded his exhortation, that they be strong in the Lord, and not suffer the worke to slacke, waiting assuredly for a blessing from the Lord. After which, as he was stirred up to a notable reformation of things amisse, so the Lord gave him a notable successe, so long as he continued, and why should we doubt of such a like worke now?

What if there are some of the pillars and grave Fathers of the Church, that with many swelling titles set downe their sentence, that all is so well as cannot be amended? If yet they flie the light of the Scriptures, or would not have their tryall to be made, it is a sore signe their conscience doth accuse them that say so, and that it is because they feele their owne nest warme. If Apostles, nay Angels from heaven, shall say as they say, we are by searching the Scriptures, to try the spirits, and the doctrin which is of God, and which is not: it might be many of the chiefest in the Church, said as much in the dayes of *Iosiah*, yet was not this enough for *Iosiah*, and the godly Magistrates to rest upon, they were to take heed to the Law of God, whatsoever they said. If it be looked before reformation, that the Ministers should all agree first amongst themselves, the Devill will never suffer that, except they will agree in a lye, and God hath decreed, *That heresies must be in his Church, that the approved may be made known.* Ioh.5.35. 1 Ioh.4.1. Mat.13.24. 1 Cor.11.19.

The best way for agreement is, to desire that both sides may come before the Word, that there may be an agreement in the truth. From the which though some shall obstinately dissent, yet are not the godly Governours to start, if the Civill Magistrates shall thinke the labouring in this cause little to concerne them, in as much as their duties concerne the bodies and outward state of men, they may not be ignorant, that their charge is to see men with their bodies outwardly, to worship the Lord according to his Word: which Magistrates, though the Church could want and do well, yet if God set them up for the good of the Church, they are first to defend the Christian

faith, & the true worship of God that set them up. As for feare of danger by innovation and alteration of the corruption of the Estate, feare of the reproches and mockes of men, that will not know that Christ is the Lord and King to raigne over his Church, feare of the unbridled malice of unreasonable men that have not faith, which this worke might set on fire, feare of losse of ease, of honour, of pleasure, it was not the feare of any of those, could let good *Iosiah* to goe through with the worke, the true feare of the Lord possessing his heart, as it is not to be doubted, but the same spirit hath his working at this time more mightily, then all men see in many, whose godly zeale may be much maliced, but shall never be quenched, whose glorious light in the truth, the light of any flames of fire shall not be able to put out or darken, whose gifts together with the number of such faithfull, the Lord increase.

But howsoever the Lord shall work at this time, we thought it needfull to avoid the guiltinesse of the spilling of much costly and precious bloud, by breaking forth into a professing of our earnest desire of the establishing of the Kingdome of Christ, and the true government of his Church: The substance whereof, our godly Fathers and brethren, have in writing plainly set downe and drawne into Tables, to behold at one view, and are we assure our selves labouring before us in the worke. We are not so dangerous to the Magistracy, seeing we acknowledge it to be from the Lord, and whereunto subjection is to be given in the Lord: we desire no Church plat-forme of our owne inventing, but that which is blessed of God, and sanctified by his word: whatsoever idolatry and superstition, and false worship of God hath beene cast out, whatsoever true worship of God hath beene set up, we approve it, we praise God for it, we desire a going forward to perfection, and to a reformation of all things according to the word. As our prayers to God shall be for our gracious Soveraigne, and for the most Honourable assembly of the Land, so we put the worshipfull Fathers of our Country, the Justices, and men of authority, whose eyes may take pitty of the poore people which goe a begging, some for lacke of the food of their soules, and some of their bodies, and

both

both wayes ready to famish. We (I say) as is our duty, put them in mind, that at this time they be not careleſſe, leaſt they buy their repentance full deare too ſoone, but that they by their humble ſeeking to God, their ſpeaking in the cauſe (their ſtudying firſt to underſtand it, and lay it to heart) by procuring other to ſpeake, by writing, by travaile, if need be, they leave no ſtone unturned, wayting for the bleſſing from him, who is the Rocke upon which the Church is ſo ſtrongly buylt, as hell gates are not able to hold it in, who is the head ſtone, that holdeth all together, to whom we commend the whole worke, that is to, Chriſt Jeſus, to whom with the Father and the holy Spirit, be all honour and glory, for ever, and ever.

Amen.

FINIS.

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